

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJ: THE PLA'S 50TH BIRTHDAY: LEADERSHIP ATMOSPHERICS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. OCTOGENARIAN PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN AND DEFENSE MINISTER YEH CHIEN-YING PLAYED THE STARRING ROLE AT THE TELEVISED "MASS RALLY" ON JULY 31 TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY. YEH'S ADDRESS PLACED UNUSUAL STRESS ON THE CORRECTNESS OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S POLICIES AND AMPLIFIED ON THE "WE WILL CERTAINLY LIBERATE TAIWAN" THEME BUT OTHERWISE CONTAINED NO SURPRISES. YEH MOVED SLOWLY BUT SPOKE IN A FIRM VOICE. HUA KUO-FENG PRESIDED OVER THE AFFAIR AND HIS PORTRAIT (WHICH SHOWED HIM CLAD IN PLA UNIFORM) WAS BESIDE MAO'S ABOVE THE ASSEMBLY. BUT THE DAY BELONGED TO THE OLD GUARD. TENG HSIAO-PING REMAINED SILENT BUT DOMINATED THE PROCEEDINGS; EACH MENTION OF HIS NAME WAS GREETED BY

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STORMY AND APPARENTLY SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE. END SUMMARY.

2. PEKING TELEVISION CARRIED LIVE THE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1 1/2 HOUR "MASS RALLY" AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE ON JULY 31 TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY. AT 3 PM CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG MARCHED TO THE ROSTRUM

FLANKED BY VICE CHAIRMEN YEH CHIEN-YING AND TENG HSIAO-PING AND FOLLOWED BY ALL POLITBURO MEMBERS (SAVE THE AILING LIU PO-CHENG AND CHEN HSI-LIEN, WHO IS LEADING A CENTRAL DELEGATION IN HUHEHOT TO COMMEMORATE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INNER MONGOLIAN AUTONOMOUS REGION).

3. HUA KUO-FENG OPENED THE CEREMONY, THEN TURNED THE ROSTRUM OVER TO OCTOGENARIAN PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN AND DEFENSE MINISTER YEH CHIEN-YING, THE SENIOR PLA LEADER AND MAN MOST RESPECTED BY THE PLA. EVEN THOUGH HUA PRESIDED OVER THE AFFAIR (DRESSED IN A PLA UNIFORM TO WHICH HE IS ENTITLED BY VIRTUE OF HIS CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE MILITARY COMMISSION) AND HIS PORTRAIT WAS PLACED BESIDE MAO'S ABOVE THE ASSEMBLAGE, THE DAY BELONGED TO THE OLD GUARD.

4. YEH CHIEN-YING, WHO MOVED TO THE PLATFORM SLOWLY BUT UNASSISTED, REMAINED SEATED THROUGHOUT HIS ADDRESS, AND PAUSED OCCASIONALLY EITHER OUT OF EMOTION OR TO CATCH HIS BREATH, NEVERTHELESS SPOKE WITH SURPRISING FIRMNESS AND VIGOR.

5. YEH'S 45-MINUTE ADDRESS PLACED EXTRAORDINARY STRESS ON THE CORRECTNESS -- INDEED INFALLIBILITY -- OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S LINE AND POLICIES. REFLECTING THE EMPHASIS SINCE THE MARCH/APRIL LEADERSHIP MEETINGS, YEH CALLED TIME AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGAIN FOR "HOLDING HIGH THE RED BANNER OF MAO TSE-TUNG THOUGHT." YEH CREDITED MAO WITH FOUNDING THE PLA, ALTHOUGH HE HEAPED PRAISE ON VARIOUS PLA HEROES OF THE PAST. IN SHORT, YEH GAVE NO INDICATION OF BEGINNING A PROCESS OF DEMAOIZATION.

6. YEH ALSO ADDED A FEW LINES -- WHICH WON APPLAUSE -- TO THE CUSTOMARY DECLARATION THAT "WE WILL CERTAINLY LIBERATE TAIWAN." (WE WILL SEND STATEMENT BY SEPTTEL WHEN OFFICIAL TEXT RECEIVED.)

7. OTHERWISE YEH'S SPEECH CONTAINED NO SURPRISES. IT:
--RECALLED THE GLORIOUS ORIGINS OF THE PLA;
--PAID OBEISANCE TO THE ENTIRE PANTHEON OF DEPARTED LEADERS (MAO, CHOU, CHU TEH, KANG SHENG, TUNG PI-WU) AND TO SLIGHTLY LESSER PLA HEROES (CHEN YI, HO LUNG, AND LO JUNG-HUAN);
--STRESSED SUBORDINATION OF THE ARMY TO THE PARTY;
--HAILED THE VICTORIOUS CONVOCAION OF THE PARTY'S THIRD PLENUM;
--PRAISED HUA KUO-FENG AS MAO'S "PERSONALLY-SELECTED" SUCCESSOR AND "GOOD STUDENT" (AT WHICH POINT THE CAMERA ZOOMED IN ON AN APPARENTLY SQUIRMING HUA);

--LOOKED FORWARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PREMIER CHOU'S
"FOUR MODERNIZATIONS," ESPECIALLY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE; AND
--AFFIRMED THE CORRECTNESS OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S "THREE
WORLDS" DOCTRINE (A SLAP AT THE ALBANIANS).

8. THREE SPEECHES BY "MASS" REPRESENTATIVES -- INCLUDING
ONE BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PLA'S MODEL "HARDBONE 6TH" --
WERE DELIVERED WITH VERVE BUT WHOLLY PREDICTABLE IN
CONTENT.

9. TENG HSIAO-PING, RESTORED BY THE THIRD PLENUM TO HIS
POST OF PLA CHIEF OF STAFF ALONG WITH HIS PARTY AND STATE
POSITIONS, REMAINED SILENT THROUGHOUT THE RALLY. BUT
TENG, SEATED TO HUA'S RIGHT, WAS A DOMINATING PRESENCE.
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THE DELEGATES RESERVED THEIR STORMIEST AND APPARENTLY MOST
SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE FOR EACH MENTION OF THE THIRD
PLANUM'S DECISION TO RESTORE TENG TO HIS POSTS -- TO THE
OBVIOUS DISCONFITURE OF SPEAKERS WHO WERE FORCED TO HALT
IN MID-SENTENCE.

10. TENG'S POPULARITY AMONG THE MASSES HAS ALSO BEEN
DEMONSTRATED THE PRECEDING EVENING, WHEN HE MADE HIS
FIRST POST-REHABILITATION PUBLIC APPEARANCE AT THE
PRESENTATION CEREMONY FOR THE PEKING INTERNATIONAL
FRIENDSHIP INVITATIONAL FOOTBALL (SOCCER) TOURNAMENT.
THE RANKING PRC LEADER AT THE EVENT, TENG WAS THE
RECIPIENT OF APPLAUSE AND ARMS-ABOVE-THE-HEAD VICTORY
GESTURES FROM THE MASSES, WHICH HE RECIPROCATED WITH
ZEST.

WOODCOCK

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